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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 NAIROBI 003257

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [SO](#) [ET](#)

SUBJECT: Somalia - PM Gedi on Reconciliation

REF: Nairobi 3163

Classified by Ambassador Ranneberger for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

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Summary  
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¶1. (SBU) See para 15 for action recommended. The Ambassador met August 11 with Somalia Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Prime Minister Ali Gedi to discuss reconciliation efforts, security in Mogadishu, and TFG efforts to secure Arab support. End Summary.

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National Reconciliation Congress  
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¶2. (C) The National Reconciliation Congress (NRC) is proceeding well, said Gedi. The Hawiye clan recognize they are responsible for the onset of conflict in 1991; they have accepted this and apologized to the Darood and Digil-Mirifle. Phase one of the NRC has finished. The TFG is planning a ceremony for August 15 in which all Somali clans will declare forgiveness. Phase two, which will discuss power-sharing and establish the political process for the remainder of the transition according to the Transitional Federal Charter, will then commence. Phase two will last 10-15 days. First there will be presentations, followed by a period for questions and answers designed to highlight the roadmap according to the Charter. Gedi said he hopes that NRC will endorse and accept a plan for completion of the transitional tasks -- a census, constitution, referendum, establishment of political parties and an electoral commission, and an election in 2009. Gedi suggested the U.S. may want to provide Ali Mahdi, the Chairman of the National Governance and Reconciliation Committee (NGRC), with a message he could read at the August 15 ceremony.

¶3. (C) Gedi said that, except for one, "the last few" traditional leaders of the Hawiye are participating in the NRC -- the Ugas of the Hawadle, the Ugas of the Dir, the Sultan of the Suleiman, and the Sultan of the Murosade. The only remaining holdout is the Ugas of the Ayr, who Gedi claims is willing to come, but is being held back by a lack of consensus within the sub-clan. The Ugas of the Ayr held a meeting of the traditional elders of the sub-clan and, despite 80 percent support for participation in the NRC, he was unable to overcome the objections of those who were opposed. He told Gedi he needed 3-4 more days of discussion, but felt he could eventually reach consensus. Gedi told us Hassan Dahir Aweys, Aden Ayrow, Yusuf Mohamed Siyad "Inda'ade", and Mohamud Uluaso are responsible for the split in the Ayr. "These four are saying the Ayr should not attend the NRC," said Gedi. The Ambassador recalled for Gedi the recent tough message he delivered to Uluaso (Reftel). Gedi knew of the meeting and he appreciated U.S. efforts on behalf of the NRC.

14. (C) The Ambassador highlighted the U.S. view that the NRC should convene for as long as it takes to include the traditional elders and clan leaders necessary for a successful outcome. Gedi asked for U.S. help specifically on the issue of property. He said it has been agreed upon that all properties shall be returned to their original owners, whether that means to individuals, clans, or government. He recognizes that this cannot happen overnight, and that issues such as compensation and available alternative housing will need to be addressed. The request of the U.S. was that we use our influence and good offices to inform others that there has been an agreement, and to obtain the support of others in the international community. The King of Saudi Arabia, said Gedi, has offered to provide funding for building houses if the TFG can provide the land.

15. (C) The Ambassador emphasized that in order to give a greater ownership stake to those who have felt left out of the TFG, the TFG must offer some positions in the government. The NRC, the Ambassador stressed, must result in real inclusive power-sharing. Gedi said recent TFG appointments are addressing this very issue. In Galgudud region, for example, even though the Haber Gedir hold only one and a half of the eight districts, the Abgal, Murosade, and the predominate Marehan have agreed to let the Ayr have the governorship. The TFG is also giving the Ayr some ambassadorships, another ministerial position, and some permanent secretary positions. Things are developing positively, Gedi assured us. The Suleiman and Duduble are all now part of the NRC and are supporting the TFG. Gedi expects the trend to continue.

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The Asmara Group  
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16. (C) The Ambassador said the U.S. is concerned about a parallel meeting being arranged by the Islamic Courts and dissident parliamentarians to take place in early September in Asmara. He asked what role, if any, the Saudis or other Arab states are playing in this effort. Gedi said the Arab League passed a resolution in Damascus last week that touched on Somalia and was clearly supportive of the NRC and the TFG. The Prime Minister of Qatar, according to Gedi, had been seeking support for the Islamic Courts and the holding of a parallel congress in Asmara. The King of Saudi Arabia, who supports the NRC in Mogadishu, met with the Prime Minister of Qatar, Gedi said, to forge greater Arab unity in support of the TFG and NRC. The King reportedly told the Qatar Prime Minister that the national reconciliation congress is the only way forward and invited Qatar to bring moderate Islamic Court leaders to Jeddah so that he might convince the moderates to support the NRC. Gedi is convinced the Saudis will not support any other process but the NRC.

17. (C) The Egyptians and Arab League, according to Gedi, have told the Asmara group that they will not meet with them unless they are willing to support the TFG and the NRC. Gedi said the Egyptians would like to provide political and financial support to the NRC and the TFG, but they first want the Asmara group to be in the process. Gedi said he is hearing from Cairo that the Asmara group wants in. Gedi also said he is hearing positive messages of support from Sudan. The Secretary-General of the Sudanese parliament, a close relative of President Omar Bashir, told Gedi the Arab League states now support the TFG and the NRC, but they want "all elements" involved without preconditions. Gedi indicated he is in regular contact with the Arab League in Cairo, Khartoum, and the Gulf states, and overall the signals he is receiving are positive.

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French/Qatar Connection  
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18. (C) Gedi told us he recently met in Addis Ababa with French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner. Kouchner reportedly knows Somalia from a previous stint as Health Minister; Gedi recalled seeing Kouchner shouldering a sack of rice at the port of Mogadishu in 1992. The French are very keen on supporting the NRC, and they also maintain good relations with Qatar, said Gedi. According to Gedi,

the son of the Emir of Qatar attended the War College in France, and his girlfriend is the sister of President Sarkozy. Kouchner reportedly told Gedi he would contact the Emir of Qatar to gain the Emir's support for the African Union Peace Support Mission for Somalia (AMISOM) as a means to achieve withdrawal of Ethiopian forces. Gedi also asked Kouchner to help arrange a meeting for Gedi with the Emir or his representative.

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Saudia Arabia  
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¶9. (C) According to Gedi, the King of Saudia Arabia, in coordination with the TFG, has invited 300-400 senior Somali elders and traditional leaders to Mecca to support the national reconciliation process. The objective is that they will declare forgiveness and sign a resolution marking the concluding first phase of the NRC. Gedi requested that we be in close contact Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal with regard to Somalia. Al-Faisal reportedly told Gedi he had been contacted by the Asmara group. Representatives of the Asmara group were said to be seeking Saudi good offices to arrange a meeting between the Asmara group and Ethiopia. Members of the Asmara group, according to Gedi, would like to attend the NRC and they want assurances of protection by Ethiopian forces in Mogadishu. Gedi said he spoke with President Yusuf and Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum, both of whom support fully the Saudi initiative to get the Asmara group to the NRC. Gedi then gave Al-Faisal "the green light" to arrange a meeting of the Asmara group and Ethiopia. Apparently the Saudis are now working on a venue.

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Security Situation  
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¶10. (C) Gedi maintained that overall security was not a problem in Mogadishu. However, he said, the TFG is still engaged in efforts to "pacify" the city. He told us that on the morning of August 11 two journalists were shot in Mogadishu, one of whom was killed. (Comment: After meeting with Gedi we learned Ali Iman Sharmarke, a Managing Director of HornAfrik media, was killed by a remote controlled mine while returning from the funeral of the journalist killed in the morning. Sharmarke (Hawiye/Haber Gedir/Ayr) was a key voice for moderation and reason within the Ayr clan, and a reliable interlocutor of the Embassy. He will be sorely missed. End Comment)

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Also yesterday there was fighting between Afgoye and Balad along the Shabelle river. Captured by the TFG (or Ethiopian forces; Gedi was not clear on this point) were 7-8 boats, explosives and weapons, Oromos, Eritreans, and "other foreign fighters." Gedi characterized the fighting as the "last pockets" of jihadist opposition.

¶11. (C) The Ambassador said that, while we hear different numbers, a consistent theme of civil society groups and members of the Haber Gedir clan is that arbitrary arrests and detentions are continuing daily. Gedi defended the security establishment, saying that intelligence and police officers are gathering information and pursuing violent extremists. He acknowledged that rather than innocent until proven guilty, the assumption of the security services now is guilty until proven innocent. However, in the ongoing operations to clean out insurgents the security forces pick up suspects, immediately investigate, and then release those involved. Gedi claimed he is urging the security services to keep better records and files on arrests, and "not to touch" journalists and those associated with the mass media unless they have specific criminal or threat information. "We want to minimize all this," said Gedi, who added that "people are content and we do not want to create any more problems."

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Joint Security Mechanism  
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¶12. (C) The Ambassador described our concept of a Joint Security Mechanism (JSM) as a framework -- chaired by AMISOM, linked with the Ethiopians, and including the TFG and representatives of the

communities of Mogadishu -- that could be the basis for enhanced security in Mogadishu, which would reduce the need for an Ethiopian presence. Gedi said that the sixteen districts of Mogadishu already have something similar in the form of "task forces" consisting of representatives of the police, the District Commissioner, the Intelligence service, the courts, and the communities. If need be, said Gedi, he could instruct Mohamed Dheere, Mayor of Mogadishu, to include a representative from AMISOM on each Task Force. Gedi was open to discuss further the idea of a JSM and how the concept might improve upon the task forces already operating.

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Petroleum Law  
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13.(C) Gedi said the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP) is currently working on a petroleum law. The draft law, according to Gedi, is "standard" and in line with what other countries have; mainly, it would confirm that oil field concessions prior to 1991 remain valid, and it would specify the conditions and regulations for any new agreements. Gedi claims that while he and Speaker of Parliament Madobe are in agreement on the need for the law, and 90 percent of the MPs support the bill, they are encountering opposition from President Yusuf. Yusuf is under pressure from China, said Gedi.

(Comment: there are various allegations that Yusuf and his family are benefiting from concession deals with the Chinese. Gedi is rumored to be pursuing his own deals. End Comment). Gedi asserted that, as drafted, the law favors no country, but the TFG is not going to recognize concessions granted after 1991. Gedi said that a number of U.S. petroleum companies had acquired rights to blocs prior to 1991. He said there are "many blocs" up for bid, and after the law is approved anyone can apply. Gedi asked for our support "to avoid conflict" between him and Madobe on the one side and President Yusuf on the other with regard to the Petroleum law. He offered to provide us with a list of all concessions granted.

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Travel  
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14. (C) The Ambassador said we would like as soon as possible to begin traveling to Baidoa on a regular basis to meet with members of the Transitional Federal Institutions, civil society, and others. Gedi asserted Baidoa is stable and "easily controlled." The TFG would like American NGOs to begin opening offices in Baidoa, and he welcomed the opening of a U.S. government office there. The Ambassador agreed that a permanent U.S. presence in Somalia is the desired end goal, but with adequate security and prudent precautions we may soon begin to engage directly with Somalis in Somalia.

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Recommended Actions  
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15. (C) We recommend sending a message for the August 15 national

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reconciliation ceremony through NRC chairman Ali Mahdi. We will send a draft to the Department for review. The indications coming from Gedi of a more positive approach by the Arab League and key players like Saudi Arabia, which not fully confirmed, require expeditious follow-up. Special Envoy Yates is planning increased regional travel, including to Addis and Djibouti, and to Saudi Arabia and Qatar, as soon as it can be arranged to pursue this.

RANNEBERGER